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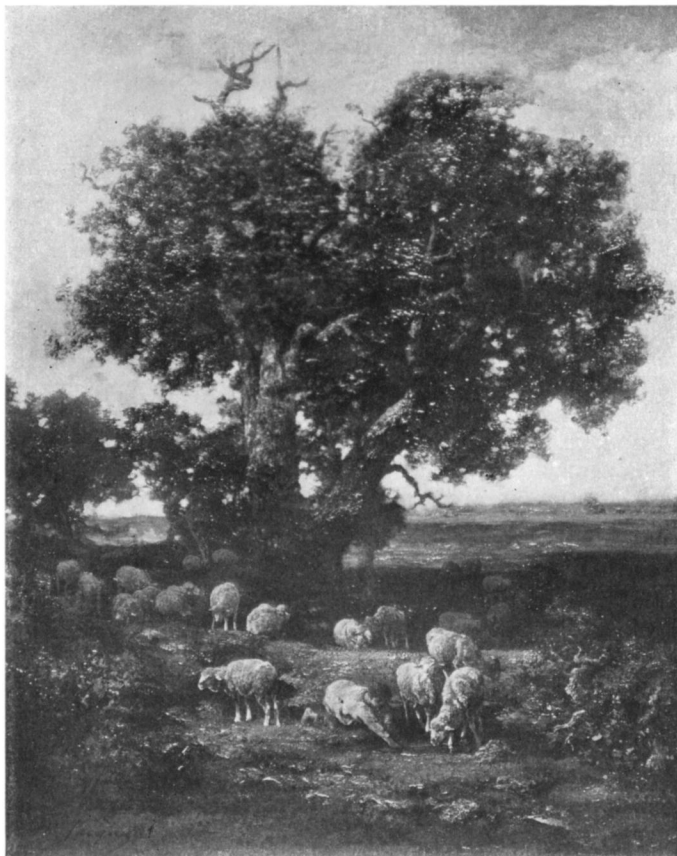
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BULLETIN OF THE CITY ART MUSEUM OF ST. LOUIS

VOLUME II

SEPTEMBER, 1916

NUMBER 2



JACQUE

LANDSCAPE

LENT BY MR. DANIEL CATLIN

ANNUAL LOAN EXHIBITION THE BARBIZON SCHOOL

WITH a loan collection of paintings of the Barbizon School privately owned in St. Louis, the museum is holding one of its more important exhibitions. American collectors were among the first to recognize the worth of the Barbizon School, as also of the Impressionist School of French painters. One result is that, fully to comprehend the Barbizon or the Impressionist movement in France, a person today would have to visit not only collections in Europe but treasures privately owned in our own country. Of these St. Louis is fortunate in having more than her share of paintings by masters of the Barbizon School, or "the men of 1830," as they have been called. The public spirit and generosity of the owners has enabled the City Art Museum to place most of these on view in Gallery 1, where they may be seen by the public until October.

The collection embraces not less than fifty-eight paintings by Corot, Daubigny, Diaz, Millet, Jules Dupré, Jacque, Troyon and Rousseau.

Corot is worthily represented; there are twelve examples of his work. Seven landscapes by Daubigny show this master in varying degrees of quality. Diaz is recalled in eleven pictures; eight canvases are from the rich brush of Jules Dupré, seven are by Jacque. There are five Millet's; four landscapes with animals by Troyon; and two landscapes by Rousseau.

It would be difficult to say anything that has not been said about the Barbizon School of painters. The world knows the men and their bearing on modern art. Of not less in-

terest, on the other hand, is the seldom discussed origin of the Barbizon movement, the reactionary way in which it overthrew conventions set by its great ancestor, the Renaissance.

It is not an isolated phenomenon. The history of art is forever repeating itself; wave succeeds wave; each rises above the ruin of its predecessor, advances confident and strong, reaches its zenith, and in turn declines.

Towards the fifteenth century, mediaeval art in Italy had not the original force of Gothic art in the north, but was a dying remnant of a glory that had been Rome's. The intrusion of Gothic forms from the north, where they were appropriate, into Italy where they did not satisfy the southern taste for a classic repose, was far from satisfactory. It was tried for a while, but being exotic and temporary it was never fully assimilated.

The loss of Constantinople to the Turks, in 1453, was a contributing source of wealth to Italian art. In Constantinople had been kept alive scholarship and a respect for the philosophy and art of the ancients. It had become fashionable in Florence and other seats of wealth and power in Italy, to collect manuscripts, to which those later taken from Constantinople were added, and to study Greek and Roman antiquities. A wave of classic revival spread over Italy and found root there, because to the Italians it was not contrary to their innermost thought, but an old friend come back. The art of Rome was theirs by inheritance; and the art of Rome was the offspring of Greek civilization, a blood relationship.

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JULES DUPRÉ

COWS DRINKING AT A POOL

LENT BY MR. WILLIAM K. BIXBY

The Italian Renaissance became strong, and it grew; hand in hand, however, with study of the past, went original investigation in science and in art. A study of the beauties of nature in her physical aspect and character supplanted a cult of mysticism. The development of painting during the fifteenth century was as scientific as it was artistic. Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian had at their command all the resources of the maturity of the period. The Renaissance was succeeded by the Baroque vogue, the main tendency of which was to overburden the classic simplicity of the Renaissance by elaborating accessories instead of working with fundamentals. The Baroque, splendid but ornate, gave way to the delicate grace of the Rococo period,

and this brings us to the occasion for the Barbizon growth. There was nothing left in the decline after Watteau but prettiness, weak and superficial, with no substantial basis left on which to build.

The Renaissance was exhausted. Academic heads in France then applied a false conclusion to art forms. "Back to the ancients!" they suggested. Artists were encouraged, not to be original, but otherwise to attempt what Italians of the Renaissance had so successfully brought about under analogous straits.

Accordingly, gifted painters wasted energy on making and worshiping images, images of things that could not be revived on the soil of France. The times had changed. Revolution, not compromise, was astir in political,

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industrial and social France. The imported conventions of the ancients would not take root. Disgusted with a sterile eclecticism, Delacroix and some others expressed themselves ingenuously and boldly.

The Salon of 1824 was made memorable by three landscapes of John Constable, which showed originality, force and naturalism, thereby making

Europe in politics. Democracy was supplanting monarchic traditions. Democracy gained the day in France, but only after a struggle, in which the year 1830 was decisive. In July of that year revolution broke out in Paris. "The revolution of July," wrote Thomas Erskine Gay, "was the commencement of a new era in the liberties of Europe. It gave an im-



DIAZ

WOOD INTERIOR

LENT BY MR. CHARLES P. PETTUS

a vivid and lasting impression on youthful artists of Paris. What Constable did for the "men of 1830" was not to lead them, but to stimulate them to break away from dead classical formulas, to see nature with their own eyes. The incentive helped the Barbizon School find itself.

France was at the same time fathering a change of sentiment throughout

pulse to the revolution in Belgium; to the insurrection in Poland; to the democratic constitutions of Switzerland; to political reforms in several of the states of Germany, and to parliamentary reform in England. Its influence was felt in Italy, in Spain, and in Portugal; in Hungary, and in the Slavonic provinces of Austria. And, even beyond the bounds of

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Europe, it reached from Egypt and Syria, in the east, to South America in the west."

"The occasion does not create, but calls forth its master. Every war has its great leader, and in the world of art great artists respond to meet the requirements of the hour." Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and other original thinkers asserted themselves. Individuals who in more settled times might not have ventured outside a state of comfortable compromise took a stand for something of intellectual honesty. The romanticist, Delacroix, had declared war on classicism in his painting, *The Massacre of Scio*; Gericault, also, in *The Raft of the Medusa*. But they were forerunners. It was the Barbizon School of painters that first showed widespread action, the united force of which produced a major wave in the history of art.

One of the strongest fighters among them was Rousseau. On view in the loan exhibition is an example of his careful work. It represents a field in a forest, with a road and wagon ruts. The composition is formal, the color rich. Characteristic of Rousseau are the rugged anatomy of the trees, trunks springing at irregular angles from the ground, dense foliage, the play of light and air in the leaves, the deep and distant sky. Like Millet, Rousseau was stirred before nature, not as still life, but as organic life. In a letter he wrote, 1863, he is very earnest about it, saying: "For God's sake, and in recompense for the life He has given us, let us try in our works that the manifestation of life be our first thought; let us make a man breathe, a tree really vegetate." It is because of this power that the trees of Rousseau are so like those of

As a boy Rousseau had spent considerable time copying Dutch land-

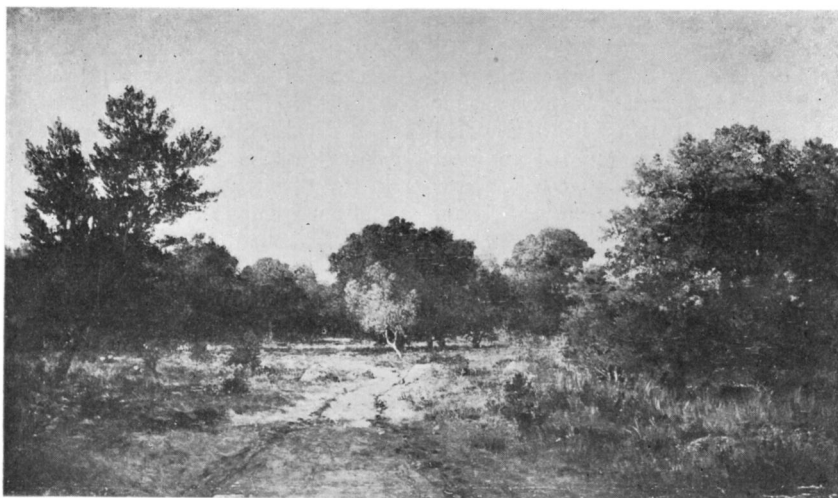
scapes and Claude Lorrain. His works have not the silvery peace of Claude, but the robust vigor of a Ruisdael. Truth above all is in a Rousseau, and Rousseau combined with depth of thought a capacity for getting to the root of nature as an artist.

If there is one thing that impresses us most about the Barbizon movement it is the avoidance of a disproportioned result. If we take line, light, color and form as the integral elements of which a painting may be composed; if we leave line principally to the old Italian masters, there remain light, color and form. The Barbizon masters were well grounded in all these. An observer may look in their works for rich and deep coloring, and atmosphere, without concerning himself with composition. They are there. Another observer may demand composition, with light and color; it is there.

From Rousseau is an easy transition to Diaz. There is an Oriental splendor to the coloring of Diaz, with his northern actuality. It reminds one of scenes among gypsies in hill-side caves about Granada, of the luxury of their costumes; it has the subdued richness of their mandolins, guitars, castanets and tambourines; it recalls professional dancers of an evening in cafés of Seville. It has a Moorish richness, not exotic to Spain, because the Moors were so long in possession that they left a descending influence.

Narcisse Diaz, he is usually called; his full name was, however, Virgilio Narcisso Diaz de la Pena. His father was a Spaniard driven out of Salamanca for political reasons when Jerome Bonaparte was in control. Add to his Spanish blood a haphazard upbringing near Paris, and there is soil for a Bohemian. He was not yet fifteen years old when the sting

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ROUSSEAU

LANDSCAPE

LENT BY MR. LOUIS WERNER

of a poisonous fly cost him the amputation of a leg. The boy was compelled to work in a porcelain factory, where he had the compensation of meeting Dupré. When he could, he broke away, and was soon painting some of those Oriental groups of women with which we are familiar. Diaz had never visited the Orient, yet portrayed it in such a way that his Spanish blood seems to have risen to the occasion.

Diaz met Rousseau in Paris in 1830, and Rousseau later became the teacher of Diaz. As landscape painter Diaz asserted himself fully about 1840. He ranks very high as a colorist. In his forest scenes we feel a beautiful color quality—colors that have been described as having the effect of molten jewels. To Daubigny the freshness of spring offered a fitting subject in landscape; Diaz excelled rather in the richer setting of summer or of autumn.

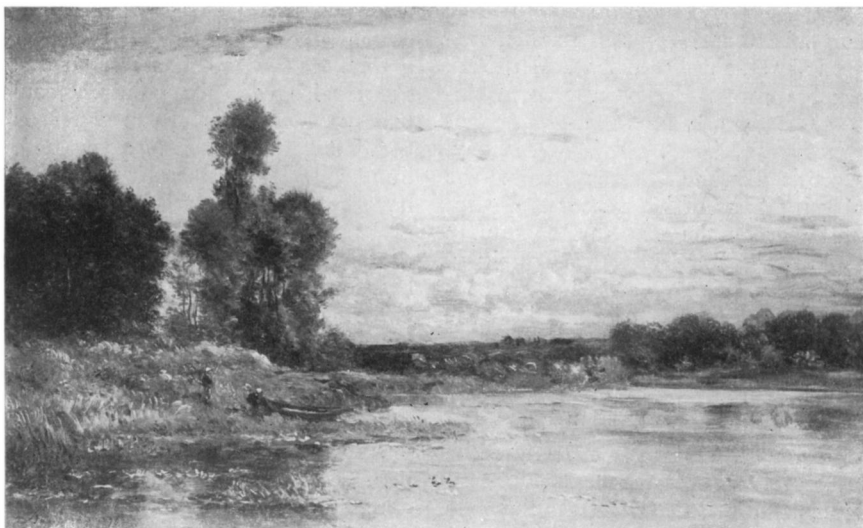
A pupil of Diaz who carried forward his method was the part-Italian,

Monticelli. Though the drawing of Diaz was not in the same class with that of Rousseau, Monticelli cared neither about drawing nor the customary composition. Valley relates with what joy Diaz painted—"as a bird sings," which would relate him somehow to Corot. Dupré, Rousseau, Millet, were of graver temperament. Diaz all his life made merry over his wooden leg,—we are told that he would dance in spite of it.

A Wood Interior, the largest canvas by Diaz in the exhibition, represents an opening in a forest, with a lighted centre. Dense and dark foliage forms a frame, and a smaller vista leads like a tunnel to an opening in the distance. A deep blue sky complements golden brown tree trunks. The influence of Rousseau is uppermost.

In the adjoining room of the museum may be seen a landscape by Frederick Ballard Williams, entitled *A Glimpse of the Sea*, which is strikingly reminiscent of Diaz.

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DAUBIGNY

RIVER LANDSCAPE

LENT BY MR. EDWARD MALLINCKRODT

It was in his uncle's factory in Paris that Jules Dupré was working when he made the acquaintance of Diaz. Porcelain decorating may explain the labored and minute precision of Dupré's earlier paintings, although from the beginning he showed another capacity. As Millet remarked about Rousseau, Dupré was destined to grow into a great oak.

Dupré visited England as the guest of Lord Grey, near Southampton; there followed some of his strong marine paintings. In view of the heaviness of Dupré's work, it is curious that he received early recognition and appreciation, while Corot, Rousseau and Millet struggled the greater part of their lives against general opposition. As early as 1833 he won a medal at the Salon.

We are told that Dupré was an admirer of Claude Lorrain, Ruisdael and Hobbema. His impassioned outlook is almost identical with that of Ruisdael in a melancholy, not dis-

pirited but aggressive and constructive, forceful, as Milton was forceful in his work, Dante, Beethoven, Tolstoi. His paintings have great energy and radiance, light and color breaking through the darkness in them. One of the finest works by Dupré in the exhibition represents *Cows Drinking at a Pool*. The colors are rich, deep and luminous. The house of a peasant is visible in the distance to the right. Majestic trees are in deep shadow on a hillside that forms part of a wonderful ground formation.

If it is true, as some think, that a figure painter can be judged from his manner of painting hands, trees offer a similar test for the landscapist. Rousseau was forceful, picturesque and just in his tree painting. Stalwart are the trees of Charles Jacque, but of another quality. They look as if they were hewn out of living rock. They are not deep-rooted in the earth after the manner of a tree by Rous-

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seau, but they stand firm upon it, like columns of an Egyptian temple, majestic in their dimensions. In Diaz we see forms Rousseau created, interpreted more for their outer appearance. For trees, Daubigny, Corot's disciple, departs from the airy lightness of his master and stops half way on the road to Rousseau.

A River Landscape by Daubigny, in the exhibition, shows two peasants shoving a boat out of grass into the water. The grass is as green as in a Weissenbruch, Maris, or Horatio Walker.

Daubigny visited Italy when he was young, as had Corot, but the style of Daubigny was less influenced by his studies there than was the style of Corot. In 1836, upon his return from Italy, we find him working as a restorer of paintings, an occupation that he did not like. For six months he was a pupil of Delaroche. Delaroche manufactured historical paint-

ings, and was a master of misapplied eclecticism. Daubigny, having for a time to decorate bon-bon boxes to support his wife and children, could paint out of doors, for himself and the Salon, only when he was free on Sundays. He is thought by some to have been the first modern landscape artist completely to finish pictures out of doors. For a time he kept a house boat, on which, floating down the Oise or Seine, the master became a familiar sight painting a record of what he liked.

Jacque and Troyon painted animals also, but the Barbizon School was in the main a group of landscape painters. There was one outstanding exception, Millet. If Millet had given us only landscape, he would still be impressive; but his figures have a major interest. There is a magnificent movement and a noble sentiment in them. Everybody honors and respects the laboring man and woman



COROT

THE SHEPHERDS

LENT BY MR. WILLIAM K. BIXBY

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of *The Angelus*, the strong but hopeless Man with the Hoe, the steadfast women Gleaners, and the courageous Sower.

The essence of landscape, however, is atmosphere, light and air. The first to envelope the fields, trees, the universe, in atmosphere when they painted were the Dutch. Only when that was done did true landscape painting begin. The first school of landscape painting was therefore theirs. It rose and fell with the Dutch republic of the seventeenth century. The growth of landscape painting has always been concomitant with democracy.

The best liked, and perhaps the greatest, master of atmosphere in the Barbizon group is Corot; and there is not a more perfect thing on earth than a fine painting by him. The exhibition has several representative specimens, including one here reproduced, called *The Shepherds*.

A delicacy in the painting of the leaves and graceful limbs of trees, a fresh and compact soil, a shepherd lightheartedly dancing in the cool

shade with his love, are all obvious things in a way, yet how elusive! How many painters except Corot have had the gentle and firm touch to grasp and register such fleeting poetry?

In *The Shepherds* there is perhaps nothing more subtle and pleasing than the sense of space it gives. "In every landscape," said Emerson, "the point of astonishment is the meeting of the sky and the earth. Cities give not the human senses room enough. We go out daily and nightly to feed the eyes on the horizon, and require so much scope just as we need water for our bath."

The horizon of a landscape by Corot gives us the sense of freedom, relaxation, exhilaration one gets in the open air of the country, after one has been blockaded and barricaded by the artificial restraints and insufficiency of city life. The sky in *The Shepherds* does not confine the scene. There is no wall set up by the sky of a fine Corot; it is light and air, space, unlimited.



COROT

LANDSCAPE

LENT BY MR. EDWARD MALLINCKRODT